

SOUTH AFRICAN RADIO LEAGUE HAMNET BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY
3 December 2006

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IN THE BULLETIN TODAY:-

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HAMNET OVERVIEW

The Hamnet Bulletin is read at 12H00 CAT on 7:070MHz. We have had to revert back to the old frequency as we are interfering with a bulletin on 7:062MHz.

The bulletin is distributed to all Provincial Directors for reading on their local repeaters a few days prior to the first Sunday of every month. All subsequent Sundays are used to establish an informal net and exchange weather reports and other items of general interest.

The HAMNET section of the SARL website is open to all amateur radio operators. This is to encourage non League members to join the League and also to encourage newly licensed amateurs to consider joining HAMNET.

Please also note that HAMNET is a voluntary, non profit group of amateurs who make their unique communication skills available to assist and help others in distress during and after disasters. HAMNET is also represented on the sub-committee of the South African Search & Rescue organisation.

Training Modules have been developed and are available either from your Provincial Director or from the National director via e-mail.

HAMNET forms part of the Constitution of the South African Radio League which means that you have to be a member of the SARL to be a member of HAMNET.

Also join us on weekdays at 6pm local time for the HAMNET Weather Net on 3:760MHz in winter and on 7:060MHz in summer. This net exchanges weather conditions around the country and is also useful as a propagation check.

DECEMBER/JANUARY HOLIDAY SEASON

The December/January holiday season has already started and schools broke up on Friday the 1st of December.

Like in the past, the request will go out to all Hamnet members to do a bit of monitoring on our emergency frequency of 7:060MHz in the 40M band. We sincerely hope that conditions may have improved to allow us to maintain good communication during specific days.

Our next weekend will be the 15th to the 17th of December when we anticipate a lot more traffic on the roads. The last “outward” monitoring few days will be over the period 22nd to 24th of December when the bulk of holiday makers will be on the road for the week break between Christmas and New Year.

We anticipate traffic on Monday and Tuesday the 1st and 2nd of January 2007 and again over the weekend just prior to the opening of schools. Those dates will be in the January 2007 bulletin.

Again, just a reminder of the JAMLINE cell phone number namely 084 JAMLINE or 084 5265463. Rob Byrne will be only too happy to hear from us regarding road conditions like accidents, snarl-ups, adverse weather conditions etc. This information gets fed into the radio network systems around the country and is useful for travellers on the road.

We will also be making use of Echolink, especially down to Pietermaritzburg and possibly down to the Southern Cape.

REGION 1 EMCOM PARTY REPORT BACK

On Saturday the 18th of November, the first Emergency Communication Party took place on the various International emergency frequencies namely 7:060MHz, 14:300MHz and 21:360MHz.

The control station in Finland was OF3F and was operating on all 3 frequencies simultaneously.

I anticipated that propagation was going to be a major factor and that all beams in Europe will be pointed toward Finland, with result, Africa will not be able to communicate with other participating stations.

This in fact turned out to be the case.

What I did prior to the event, was to set up an alternative network via EchoLink and Skype in order to establish some form of contact with one or two participating stations in the U.K.

Paul Gaskell G4MWO, my RAYNET contact person in the U.K. also advised me of 2 other operators who were either on EchoLink and Skype and also members of RAYNET.

Steve Richards G4HPE was on EchoLink via a Conference Site called “IRESC”, which I will elaborate on later in the bulletin, and Greg Mossop GØDUB was on Skype.

I also requested as many Hamnet members to be on 7:060MHz and on 14:245MHz at given times, so I could report back to Seppo Sisatto OH1VR who organised the event, how many operators we had active in South Africa.

It all worked perfectly!

I tried to establish contact on HF running full power, but to no avail. I could hear stations giving reports to control and establishing contact among themselves,

but that was the end of HF. Poor conditions were confirmed by at least 2 other stations in South Africa.

I then went over to EchoLink and logged on to the IRESC conference site.

That's when things started to become interesting! What was nice was that Steve was relaying from HF in the U.K. through to the website and one could listen to the various station making contact not only with control but also among themselves.

From that moment on we could communicate with each other via the note pad and comment on activities.

I submitted a report to Seppo with a copy to Steve as he requested a copy to be discussed among their members. I have also been in touch with Seppo via Skype as he is recovering at home after a bypass operation. He thanked us for our participation and report and a full report will be available on the IARU Region 1 site in due course.

My thanks to the 33 operators who were active in South Africa during this exercise!

IRESC ALTERNATIVE EMERGENCY NETWORK

The International Radio Emergency Support Coordination group is an alternative emergency group who assist during and after emergencies as a support to HF communication or when propagation is poor.

In brief, the main objective is to foster efficient collaboration between Amateur Radio Operators, extend friendships across the world and provide international emergency communications in times of need.

The IRESC team has coordinated with several countries throughout the world to form a solid international coalition of amateurs who are dedicated to helping at all times of the day or night.

The website address is www.iresc.com and anybody who would like to view this site will find the information very interesting.

I have already been asked to have my name added to the list of volunteers as there are no representatives in Africa south of the Sahara. I agreed and on the website you can see who the volunteers are around the world including Bharati Prasad whom I met in Finland last year from India.

Their website includes the following headings for quick checks starting with an Alert Status which at present read none.

How to become a member and how to report an emergency are all covered on the web site.

They make use of several modes of communication including HF, APRS, VHF, UHF, amateur satellites, Echolink and VoIP communications.

They currently have over 30 active member countries and one can log onto their web site any time to listen to activities whilst an emergency is on the go.

To access the site on EchoLink, click Node Types, then Conferences and then scroll down to IRESC. Log on and listen to activities. Prior to logging on you can actually see if there is any activity on the go.

I thought this may of interest to you all.

FINAL COMMENTS

A point to ponder can we change the Hamnet bulletin time to possibly a more convenient time or even another day! I mentioned this in last month s bulletin but the comments so far have been few and far between. I would not like to change things autocratically, but rather by reasonable consensus.

Please give this some thought and come back to me preferably via e-mail!

There will still be a fair amount of activity before Christmas day, but Estelle and I would like to wish all of you a blessed Christmas and a very prosperous and healthy 2007.

I personally would also like to thank all the regular Hamnet operators for their help assistance and enthusiasm during this past year. May next years emergencies be few and far between!

That is all for today. Comments and suggestions to: jfbotha@iburst.co.za

More information available on www.sarl.org.za then click on HAMNET in the left hand column for all the details you may need. Bulletin ends.